

Audrain Civil War Stories

The Narrow Escape Of Dr. W. W. McFarlane, Of Mexico, Who Was Almost Executed By Federal Soldiers.

Along in July desperate efforts were made by the Confederates and citizens who were secessionists, to destroy the North Missouri Railroad, so as to break up the line of communications established by the Union forces. They succeeded in practically destroying the railroad from Wellsville to within a short distance of Mexico, destroying the bridge west of Mexico on the 27th day of July. In the destruction of this bridge a number of citizens of Mexico were engaged. They acted under a commission from General Price who sent men along the line of the North Missouri Railroad for that purpose commissioned to destroy the railroad with authority to procure assistance from the citizens. A great many citizens of Audrain county were arrested for their participation in this matter but none were ever tried for it by court-martial although a great number were sent to St. Louis and Alton as prisoners on account of it.

John B. Henderson of Pike county, prominent before the war as a Democrat and distinguished as a lawyer, raised a regiment of militia for the Union side. Colonel Jefferson F. Jones equally prominent as a lawyer, in Callaway county, raised a regiment under the call of Governor Jackson for troops to prevent invasion of the state. These two distinguished men being well acquainted and having probably met as antagonists often in court, concluded to effect a compromise and so far as they and their sections were concerned, bring about a fightless, bloodless war. In August 1861, they met at Benton City about six miles east of Mexico and signed a paper providing that the Union forces should after that date, keep out of Callaway county and the Missouri defense or Confederate forces should after that date keep out of Pike county. It is needless to say that when this compromise was brought to the attention of the Federal authorities it was promptly repudiated. Colonel Jones' force soon surrendered and disbanded. He was taken a prisoner by the Federal forces and put under bond for good behavior during the remainder of the war. He was tried by court-martial, but not found guilty of violation of any of the Articles of War.

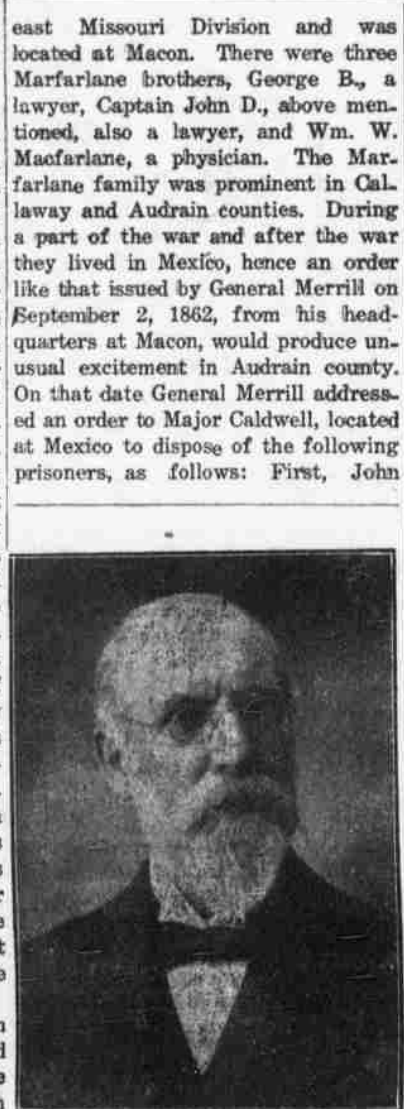
Colonel Henderson continued in charge of his command but changed his views as to warfare. He became brigadier general and was placed in charge of a section of the country in north Missouri. He was located at Mexico in the early part of January, 1862, and on January 9th reports having captured forty prisoners, ten of whom he took in battle. They were held by the Federal authorities for bridge burning.

After Henderson came Major H. C. Caldwell Third Iowa Cavalry. He and different detachments of his men were located at Mexico for some time.

Another attempt to organize a company for the Confederate forces was made by William O. Johnson, in the northern part of Audrain county, in the early winter of 1861. On the 24th of December, a company of Colonel John W. Burge's Sharp Shooters, then called, afterward the Thirtieth Missouri Infantry, was on its way from Palmyra to Sturgeon and in order to avoid the timbers and thus escape chances of ambush, they detoured south through Audrain county over the prairie and stopped to rest in a barn known as McClintock's barn, situated on the northeast corner of section 16, township 52, range 9. This presented a splendid opportunity to the mind of Captain Johnson for a battle or surrender. His company was mostly undisciplined farmers of the neighborhood. He approached the barn from the east and when within a short distance of it, halted, lined up his men, to give the Federals an opportunity to surrender. They filed out of the barn, formed a line of battle, swung around in front of Johnson's company, to use the language of Johnson, "like a gate," and when all this military precision was observed, before any one had time to fire, his men broke. The Federal company fired a volley or two after them, probably not aiming to hit anybody and continued on their way to Sturgeon, arriving there the next day in time for the battle of Mount Zion, in Boone county. This resulted in the dissolution of Captain Johnson's company.

In the battle of Mount Zion, on the Union side, Captain John D. Macfarlane of Mexico distinguished himself in action and was mentioned in the report of the battle, for meritorious services. Later on account of his splendid services in the Ninth Missouri Cavalry his brother Wm. W. Macfarlane, a Confederate soldier, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Moore's Mill, and ordered shot without a judgment of court martial, had his sentence commuted to imprisonment at Alton, Illinois.

In September, 1862, General Lewis Merrill was commanding the North-



DR. W. W. McFARLANE,

Who only died recently, and whose narrow escape from death in Audrain during the civil war is an interesting historic incident.

Gastemee, to be shot to death, the 5th of September, between the hours of 10 A. M. and 3 P. M., at Mexico, Missouri. Second, W. W. Macfarlane, to be shot to death on Friday, the 5th of September, between the hours of 10 A. M. and 3 P. M., at Mexico, Missouri. Third, Solomon Donaldson, to be shot to death on Friday, the 5th of September, between the hours of 10 A. M. and 3 P. M. at Mexico, Missouri. There was no attempt made to carry out the order as to Gastemee and Donaldson, but what final disposition was made of them there is no account. As to Macfarlane, he was ordered to be taken to the execution ground and an order read to him as follows: "In consideration for the noble stand taken for the right by your brother, Captain Macfarlane of the Ninth Missouri State Militia, the commanding general is pleased to order that your life be spared and your sentence commuted to confinement during the war." Amidst great excitement of the people of Mexico and a large crowd which had gathered there that day to witness the execution of Dr. Macfarlane, as well as three others, he was led to the execution grounds, where all necessary preparations for this execution had been made. Standing in his place, the order was read to him, whereupon he was returned to the prison house and removed to prison in St. Louis, where he remained for some time, thence to Alton, where he remained for some time, thence to Alton, where he remained until December 30, 1862, when he was paroled by Col. J. O. Broadhead, provost marshal at St. Louis.

By another order, Major Elliott Major of Monroe county was ordered to be shot at Mexico at the same time as Macfarlane. Major had been in the Confederate service taken prisoner and discharged upon taking the oath of allegiance and not to again bear arms against the United States. He had violated his oath and had again taken up arms for the southern cause, having been given a commission as Major in General Joe C. Porter's command. Upon being taken prisoner the second time this order was made. Major had participated in the battle at Kirksville under Porter and afterward at Chariton river. He had sur-

One Hundred Years

By Betty Earle

One hundred years—and in the place
Of wilderness, a wheat-held space
With fields full-golden make the run
Of acres countless in the sun
And rich as sunlight's own vast face.

Such is the State. Her arms embrace
The food of multitudes, her pace
Moves upward among visions spun
One hundred years.

Scorn not her patience in the race
For saintliness. While footsteps trace
A path of service nobly done,
Mute on her brow, as on a nun,
Calm golden-rod has wreathed a grace
One hundred years.

rendered under promise of being tested as a prisoner of war.

In the minds of the people of Audrain and Monroe counties, there has always been a romance connected with the release of Major. He had a sweetheart living at Paris, Missouri, the daughter of a Union man. Lieutenant Cravin Hartman of the Third Iowa Cavalry, located at Mexico and part of the time at Paris, was attempting to pay his addresses to the sister of Majors sweetheart. Hartman was a fine looking young fellow but considerable of a swash-buckler and in order to ingratiate himself into the good graces of this young lady, pretended at least to be interested in the release of Major. Pohn W. Beatty now living in Mexico accompanied Hartman to Monroe county to secure to influence of Union men there to petition General Merrill to prevent the execution. Just how far Hartman's influence went is not known, or if it be real or pretended, may never be known. Hartman turned out to be a man of neither veracity nor integrity. He committed many depredations in this section of the state, under the guise of war fare.

It is more probable that the kind-heartedness and soldierly conduct of Major Caldwell had more to do with the saving of Major's life, as well as the others from Monroe county, who were ordered shot, than that of any other person. In a letter of September 6, 1912, to the author of this sketch, Judge Caldwell says: "The day after I received this order, the mothers, sisters and friends of these men, appeared at my headquarters in Mexico to entreat for their lives—the day fixed by orders for their execution was only four days off. The delegation was headed by Mr. Marion Biggs, of Monroe county, one of the kindest and most tender-hearted men I ever knew. He was so highly esteemed by both sides in the war, that neither side molested him; and he devoted himself to the task of interceding for the relief of his neighbors (whether rebels or Federals, he made no distinction) who were so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of the enemy and likely to become victims to the rigors and passions of a civil war.

"As soon as the delegation entered my headquarters and before Mr. Biggs or any other member of it had spoken a word, I said, 'Mr. Biggs, you don't have to tell me what you or your friends have come here for. You want to save the lives of these men who are under sentence of death, which I am ordered by my superior to carry into effect. I have not the power to cancel General Merrill's orders however much I might desire to do so, but I can tell you who can cancel these orders and how you can save the lives of these men.' At that remark a female voice in the crowd cried out in great anguish, 'Oh, for God's sake, tell, tell, tell us quick.' And I replied, 'Hasten to the railroad station and catch the morning train to St. Louis and as soon as you get there, go to the headquarters of General Curtis and tell him what you have come here to tell me. He is one of the most humane and tender-hearted men you ever saw and when you have told your story, he will at once revoke General Merrill's orders, and send me an order to that effect. Have him send his order to me by telegraph and give you a duplicate to fetch to me, so that if the wires are cut and the order by telegraph does not reach me, you will be sure to get here with the one entrusted to you. Now go quickly and catch your train.' Major Caldwell is right," said Biggs, "we must act on his advice, come let's go." And they hastened to the station, caught the train, got to St. Louis and by eleven o'clock the next day, I had received an order from General Curtis, revoking the orders to shoot the men, and directing me to send them to St. Louis."

Major was sent to prison at Alton, where he remained for some time and was regularly exchanged, reentered the Confederate army, and after the close of the war removed to California,



PICTURES FROM THE HARDY N PAGEANT OF OCT. 18, 1914. In the upper one the two young daughters of Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Worrell are dressed as early pioneers and are on their way to church.

The lower picture shows Mrs. C. W. Lewis and Mrs. K. M. Deane, who spun during one of the scenes.

where while city marshal of a town in that state, died.

Major Caldwell was in charge of the post at Mexico through the summer and fall of 1862. During the time here, he with his command, fought Porter at Florida, July 22nd; Santa Fe, called by the Federals, but by the Confederates, called Botts' Bluff, July 24th; and Moore's Mill with Colonel Guitars' regiment, July

28th. After the battle at Botts' Bluff Caldwell pushed Porter south in Audrain county, north of the Callaway line on the north fork of Salt river, where Porter's men rested for a day or two before the engagement at Moore's Mill. Major Caldwell has always been well and favorably remembered by the people of Audrain county.

After the battle of Lexington, Silas

Monarch Metal Weather Strips

For

WINDOWS AND DOORS

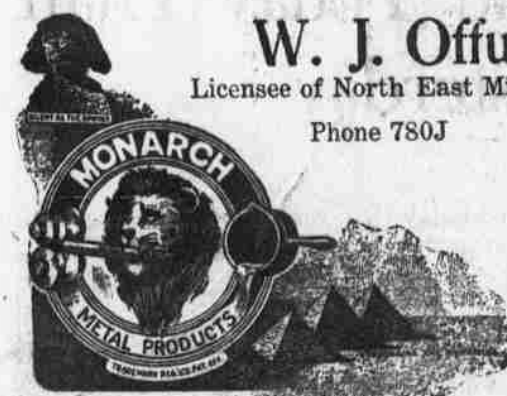
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W. J. Offutt

Licensee of North East Missouri

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The Silver Grill

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L. Hickerson, a member of Murray's command, returned to Audrain county with a commission as a captain, for the purpose of recruiting a company. He was never able to get back to Price's army, but with his company joined Porter and remained in Audrain and surrounding counties. He was in the battles of Florida, and Santa Fe, and was looked upon by both sides as a guerilla.

Another arm of Audrain county, with a company, was Young Purcell.

Before the war he was a farmer on Littleby. With his band he was part of the time with Porter and at other times out carrying on the usual work of a bush-whacker on his own account. On August 13, 1862, he and another, with a company of two hundred men, entered Columbia and liberated the Confederate prisoners there in jail, one of whom was Wm. R.

(Continued on Page 5)



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